

Budget Message
Catawba County Social Services
FY 2005-2006

Fiscal Year (FY) 2005-2006 marks a milestone in the Agency's history, as it results in 10 years operating under the "Reinventing Government" philosophy. The flexibility allowed by this creative initiative has allowed Social Services to be more proactive in adjusting to meet the needs of an ever-changing community.

Additionally, this will be the second year of "Leading by Results". Through this initiative the Board of Social Services caused outcomes to be streamlined while keeping the Mission, Visions, and Goals outcome based and results oriented. For fiscal year 2005-2006 the Board established goals are:

- Vulnerable children are in safe, nurturing, financially stable environments.
- Citizens will become or remain economically independent.
- Frail elderly and disabled are safe and have opportunities to remain in their home.
- Citizens will be knowledgeable of and satisfied with Social Services.
- Social Services will operate with the highest standards of effectiveness and efficiency.
- Children and families will have access to nurturing, education, support and treatment services to maximize family functioning.

FY 2005-2006 will be challenging both financially and programmatically, as new initiatives are fully integrated into existing Social Services structure. Likewise, with major legislation up for renewal, the financing for Social Services nationwide could be changed dramatically. Also, the Medicare Drug Program will place eligibility determination responsibilities with social services effective January 2006. . Because of these uncertainties, the strategic positioning of the Agency within the community is as important as ever.

This year's budget highlights the strategic creativity of staff and management. The focus will be on strengthening families through a merging of Social and Medical models, creating self sufficiency through Work First and supporting efforts, and insuring the safety of the community's most vulnerable populations. The fiscal year is anticipated to be an innovative approach to community needs.

Family Net has proven to be a positive merger for the community. With the ability to more seamlessly address consumer's medical and social needs, plans can be developed to coordinate services and create a strong system of quality care. This cohesion, along with further partnering of community resources, has resulted in true coordination throughout the child welfare continuum.

Furthermore, staff is working to continue with the self- sufficiency investment. A marked improvement in the unemployment numbers over the last year led to only partial relief, as underemployment plagues many citizens. To support these citizens in their employment efforts, the Agency insures the coordination of day care, transportation, nutrition, counseling, child support, and

medical coverage. These support services are the key to employment for both the employee and the employer.

The senior population continues to grow at an escalating pace, increasing the need for home and community based services. The Agency's aim is to assist seniors in remaining in their own homes by coordinating home and community based services. In fact, over the last several years, the agency has realized \$800,000/ year in savings through such coordination. However, with no real increase in funding for this population in over 5 years, many of these services would not be possible without the help of over 750 volunteers.

Aligning these efforts while maintaining the strategic focus of the Agency is always challenging. To insure the Organization remains committed to the core values and goals, the Agency created 30 outcomes. Some of the Agency's outcomes are:

- 80% of children receiving 3 sessions of out patient therapy will show a 10% improvement...
- Repeat maltreatment will be prevented within six months in 90% of families...
- 94% of citizens who leave Work First will remain off assistance for one year.
- 90% of the 1074 persons receiving nutritional services will experience health/nutritional awareness, reduced isolation and increased independence.

The changing political landscape offers additional challenges for Social Services' over the next year. With Mental Health reform continuing, financial legislation in flux, and a community that continues to struggle economically, the agency's resources will likely be stretched more than ever. Although the state has assisted in providing needed funding in Child Welfare, many dollars are still needed to meet the demands of the community and provide the services needed at appropriate levels.

The total 2005-06 budget is \$179,677,935. The total county share is \$15,902,158 of which \$6,093,871 represents funding for Non-Mandated Services. Mandated Services are projected to increase by 10.8%, or \$950,000 from FY 2004-05 to FY 2005-06. Medicaid accounts for \$850,000 of this increase. Catawba County's percentage of the total budget continues to decrease, as only 8.85% is county funding for 2005-06 compared to 8.95% in 2004-05.

Overall, the 2005-06 budget includes the following increases: 3% for salaries, 7% for health insurance, 3% for dental insurance, and 1% for operations. To assist, in part, with these increases, the county share allocation was increased by \$185,143, a 3.1% increase over current levels. With the use of surplus, the budget is balanced and the overall mission remains unchanged: Social Services will continue to provide quality services to the citizens of Catawba County in a customer focused, efficient, and effective manner.